

BOOK REVIEW

Buckley, Ann and Theodore O. Hendrickson. 1996. *Native Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of Cape Cod and the Islands*. vi + 70 pp. The Natural History of Southeastern New England, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Print Shop. Available from UMass Dartmouth Bookstore, Dartmouth, MA 02714. \$12.95.

Any book which attempts to explain any portion of the natural world to the general public is desirable and important. This book(let), which is part of a series devoted to the natural history of southeastern New England, is particularly important because the large numbers of summer visitors who visit the area now have a source of information about, at least, the common native and naturalized woody plants.

The authors apparently set a very limited goal for themselves, viz., to provide keys to, small line drawings of the twigs and leaves of, and very brief descriptive comments about, 125 common woody species. What they have done is successful. It is unfortunate that they did not try to do more. If they wish public support (e.g., money), scientists have an obligation to try to show the general public what it is that they find exciting about their field of study, what interesting information they uncover. The public is interested in information.

It would have been nice if the readers could learn:

1. How many kinds of higher plants are native to Cape Cod and the Islands? How many of them are trees, shrubs and vines? (Svenson and Pyle's *Flora of Cape Cod*, 1979 is apparently long out of print and not readily available to the public.)
2. How were the particular species selected? One wonders, for example, at the absence of *Ailanthus*.
3. It would be worth noting, in these days when species extinction is a topic of conversation, how quickly some exotics have become naturalized (and what did they replace?).

Ailanthus altissima, introduced to this country in 1784, was beginning to naturalize by 1870, and was noted as a roadside escape around New Bedford and Buzzards Bay in 1911.

Berberis thunbergii, introduced into cultivation in North America about 1864, was still noted as a garden plant around New

Bedford and Buzzards Bay in 1911; it is not mentioned in the 7th edition of Gray's Manual (1907).

Berberis vulgaris (introduced in colonial times), which only received passing mention in the booklet, was widely distributed in 1907. Has it become more uncommon in the intervening 90 years?

Lonicera japonica was introduced in 1806, naturalized from Connecticut to Florida by 1907, but was still only a garden plant around New Bedford and Buzzards Bay in 1911.

Robinia pseudoacacia was esteemed for ship building (in particular for the production of trunnels [tree nails]) and for rot-resistant posts. A southern species, it was widely planted in New England by farmers. It seems, in many areas, not to spread by seed, so the clumps we find are memorials to some former farmer's diligence.

Rosa rugosa was introduced into cultivation in this country about 1845. It was noted, with *Rosa multiflora* (introduced sometime before 1868), as a garden plant around New Bedford and Buzzards Bay in 1911. It was first noted as an escape in 1912.

And this doesn't mention the deforestation and reforestation of Cape Cod. There is so much that the visitor would find interesting.

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